

# THE LITTLE UNITY.

•\* TENDER • TRUSTY • AND • TRUE. •\*

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## WATER STARWORT AND ITS GUEST.

C. H. CLARKE.

Judging from its name, should you not expect the water Starwort to have starry white blossoms? Whereas it is rather difficult to see that it has any blossoms at all, the meager little flower consisting either of one solitary stamen, or of a stamen and pistil, without any calyx or corolla. The "star" is green, and composed of the cluster of upper leaves, which float on the surface of the water, radiating from each other in quite a stellate manner. These leaves are usually rounded at the end and narrowed towards the base, while those which grow lower down on the stem and under the water are long and narrow. But like most water plants its foliage is very variable; sometimes all the leaves are rounded, and sometimes all narrow, and I have just found some which had the leaves at the ends of the branches narrow and those below round. This plant is common in ditches, pools and slow streams, and often forms beautiful masses of a very bright fresh green color.

But fond as I am of this pretty plant on its own account, and also because it thrives well in an aquarium, it has other claims to my regard. I frequently find upon it one of my favorite caddis-worms, a charming little creature which I call "Undine," as I am unable to learn its scientific name. The delicate case is a straight tube, sometimes as much as an inch long, about a sixteenth of an inch across at the head end and tapering to a point at the other. The case is of this shape while the larva is growing, but when it is full grown the case is usually shorter, not over half an inch long, and evenly cylindrical. During the quiescent period each end of the case is closed with a snug-fitting disc which has a small round hole in the center.

The larva feeds upon the Starwort and other water plants, and also uses them for the construction of its case. It bites off tiny pieces of the leaves, not over an eighth of an inch long, and quite narrow, and arranges them side by side in a spiral which winds indifferently either to the right or left, the direction continuing the same in the same case. In a case one inch long there are eleven turns to the spiral.

This small water-nymph has one accomplishment not possessed by many other caddis-worms—it can swim! While swimming the case is held in an oblique position, and the head and slender hind legs are protruded from its upper end, the legs being used as oars. It is very easy to keep the "undine" alive in an aquarium, and to rear the perfect insect, which is a dainty little creature, yellowish in color, softly shaded with brown, and having very long hairlike antennæ.

## FEATHER-MOSSES.

All the mosses hitherto described are what is called "terminal-fruited,"—that is, the fruit or the fruit stalk grows directly on the top of the stem. Sometimes, however, if you find old, last year's fruit, young shoots will have grown up around it, making it look as if from the side of the stem. Mosses where the fruit stalk really proceeds from the side of the stem are called "lateral fruited." When these mosses have a capsule which is not quite erect, but tilted a little upon the stem, or even curved into a semicircle, and with a double fringe around the mouth of the box, they are called "feather-mosses." The botanical name is *hypnum*, which is an old Greek name for some moss.

Feather-mosses grow in all sorts of situations, on the ground, on rocks, on trees, on decayed wood, in dry places, in wet places, and even under water. The stems are apt to trail over the ground, or rocks, or wood, making a green spreading carpet; but they may stand erect, and, indeed, these mosses vary greatly in size, color, form and other characteristics.

C. H. C.

## SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

while the leaves are still on the trees, to examine them carefully for leaf galls, leaf-miners, tent-makers and all the other curious forms of life which you will not be able to find later in the season. Write down the date and locality and any other item of information which you can obtain about those specimens which you preserve, and next winter you will greatly enjoy sorting them over and classifying them, especially if you can find some other young people to form a natural history society with you, and help you in the collection and study.

C. H. C.

## OATHS.

KATE GANNETT WELLS.

Children know what swearing means. But do they often stop to think that many of the slang phrases they use are also derived from swearing words? If they did it would frighten them, because they do not really mean that they want God to punish their playmates; yet that is the chief idea that lies at the bottom of most swearing words; it is some use of the word God in an improper manner.

But once an oath was only a solemn way of declaring that one spoke the truth. There were a great many ways of what is now called "administering the oath;" that is, of saying in court that one is uttering the truth. Now, you all know that if one is called into court as a witness, he must hold up his right hand as a sign that he promises to speak the truth.

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Some people say that this holding up of the hand had its origin in the fact that criminals had the fingers of their right hand cut off, and so, when called upon to hold up that hand, people saw they had been wicked, and therefore could not be believed as witnesses in any trial. Supposing that should be done now-a-days, would some children lose their fingers? And supposing one was cut off for every lie, how soon would the ten fingers be gone?

The custom of valuing the right hand more than the left is so old that it is hard to tell how it began; perhaps because the East was always considered the lucky quarter, and the right hand points towards that. The Bible always speaks of the right hand as the place of honor, and we ourselves talk of getting on the right side of people. Yet if we had trained ourselves to use our left as well as our right, we should be stronger, and who knows but the fashion then might have arisen of holding up both hands when taking the oath. If a man has not a right hand he must hold up his left; so, after all, holding up the hand is only by way of emphasis; for a man's word ought to be as sacred as it is with the Quakers, who simply "affirm," though they were not allowed to do so in Massachusetts till 1759.

Each nation has its own way of taking the oath. In England, many years ago, a Chinaman was sworn by holding in his hand a saucer, which he threw on the ground at the conclusion of the oath, believing that God would crack his body as he had cracked the saucer if he did not tell the truth. Still longer ago, in China, a cock's head was cut off when a man took an oath. In Bombay a cow used to be brought into court and the witness was sworn while holding on to the tail of the animal. He would also drink holy water from the Ganges, and eat the leaves of a sacred plant as earnest of his truth.

In Spain the witness used to put his thumb across his finger in the form of a cross, which he then held up and kissed. In some places three fingers were placed upon and two underneath the Gospels; the two below indicated future punishment to body and soul if one swore falsely; the three above signified the Trinity. In Spain and Italy, once, women—and now the clergy—placed their hands on their breasts, because they used to carry little copies of the Gospels hanging round their necks, so that one could swear on the Bible, unseen by others.

The old English form was to kiss the Bible, and our Puritan fathers were often punished for considering that idolatrous, and being willing only to hold up their hand. In 1797, however, a law was passed that made the lifting up of the hand a sufficient ceremony.

All these various modes show how unimportant is the action compared with the fact of speaking the truth; the act does not make truth, but to tell a lie when one has sworn an oath not to do so, is especially wicked, and is punished by fine and imprisonment.

You must either soar or stoop,  
Fall or triumph, stand or droop;  
You must either serve or govern,  
Must be slave or must be sovereign;  
Must, in fine, be block or wedge,  
Must be anvil or be sledge.—*Goethe.*

## THE LITTLE UNITY.

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Now that school work has you fairly in its hold again it is the real business of your life, and you will not find it wise to undertake many other things. Neither should you expect, because of those busy hours, the time outside of them is only for idling. Exercise in the fresh air every pleasant day is first in importance. If you are temperate in both work and play, each will give help and relish to the other.

Do you know that it is impossible for you to get any water to drink that is not impure? The purest spring water, or even the rain drops you may catch from the clouds, is not perfectly pure water. The chemist knows how to extract all these impurities, but you can not find it so in nature, and it would not be so thirst-quenching and healthful for you to drink. This is one of the most useful things in giving health and cleanliness to the body. With the surroundings of the soul, the good things of your life are not without their pains. Your friends are not perfect any more than yourself, yet it is good to be with them, and the resistance you make against that which is below you, with your yielding to the upward tendencies of that which is above you, in those friends, gives health and order to your spiritual life. The great Chemist knows how to extract the impurities of the soul, but that condition is not for this life.

## A HORNET'S HOUSEKEEPING.

Two little girls, coming from school, stopped to watch a blue-black hornet who had captured a green worm, about one inch long, and was trying to store it away. Dragging it along the edge of the board sidewalk till he reached the ground, he released his hold, and proceeded very rapidly to dig, apparently with his head and forelegs, a deep hole. If the worm, which was still alive, moved a little, the hornet returned to it, and buzzing about, appeared to suck the blood of his victim. When, after many interruptions, he considered his hole deep enough, at three or four inches, he backed slowly down, drawing the hapless worm after him. He remained a few minutes busily doing something which could not be seen, and then came up, rolled a few little stones to the entrance of his storehouse, and flew away. The children, curious to explore, dug down to see what had been done, and found the worm all cut into small pieces; just then the hornet returned, and finding his quarters invaded, made a great ado, buzzing loudly and running angrily about here and there to collect the fragments of his feast. One of the girls took her slate pencil and

quickly bored a new hole for him, which, after some demur, he accepted, and this time was allowed to store and cover without further disturbance.

HOLMES, WHITTIER AND LONGFELLOW LEAFLETS. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Boston. Price, 60 cts.

In a convenient little portfolio, having on one side a picture of the author, can be found "Leaflets" from either one of your favorite poets, Whittier, Holmes, or Longfellow. They are good selections, well illustrated, either of prose or poetry from the written works of these different poets. In each portfolio is a book of one hundred pages or more, bound in pamphlet form, and the same number of single unbound leaves containing the same selections.

For you boys and girls who are learning a piece, as we say, to repeat in school, they would be very convenient. You could slip one of these leaves into your history and carry it to school with you for the selection to be approved by your teacher, and have it at hand where you could study it if you had a little leisure from other work.

I wonder how many of you are in the habit of learning one good poem from some standard author every month. Did you ever think what a fund of delightful knowledge you would have gained in a few years' time were you to do this? I know a girls' school where it was one of the requirements to learn thirty lines of poetry every week, to be repeated on Saturday morning. After a while, so easy did the task become that many of the girls could leave their thirty lines until Friday, with the certainty that they could master them in due season. I would not recommend this plan, however. It would be better to learn the poem in one day, the first of the week, if that is all the time you need for it, and repeat it to yourself every day after until the time for reciting it comes. In this way you would be more likely to make it a part of yourself; and unless you remember what you learn, the time spent in learning it is little better than thrown away,—in Longfellow's words, "Believe me, the talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well."

M. E. L.

#### CHILD'S PRAYER.

FLOY.

Father in heaven, help me I pray,  
Forgive the sins I commit each day.

Help me in future, keep me aright;  
Help me by day, and keep me by night.

May I loving, kind and gentle be,  
Forgiving sins as thou forgiv'st me.

[These lines have been sent by a little correspondent and subscriber in South Carolina.—ED.]

Get acquainted with what there is in to-day; take what it contains and appropriate it to yourself.—James A. Garfield.

#### WISHING-LAND.

Roving around in Wishing-Land  
Is not the journey to take;  
You can not bring away in your hand  
The things you wish in your life to make.

It's not a place where you may go  
And dally amid its pleasures;  
You must take but its messages, swift or slow,  
And work till they bring forth treasures.

"Where is the land where wishes grow?"  
And "Why may I not linger there?"  
Between the night and the day, you know,  
Comes the dawn with new life in its air.

And when "I wish" you frequently say,  
Although it be ever so true,  
It is only the dawning before the day,  
In what it leads you to do.

If it leads you on in the search to fulfil,  
You find the bright day of endeavor,  
With its work, its noon and its evening, so still;  
Night and dawn keep returning forever.

But wishes, not earnest to lead you on,  
Leave you loitering, content with good will;  
If you rest too long in the glamor of dawn,  
Your days will grow cloudy and chill.

Then linger not there with the charms you see;  
Each returning brings others more fair,  
For later, it will not your Wishing-Land be,  
But your innermost moment of prayer.

To do, to act, and to be, is the light  
Of the days coming in through swift dawning;  
So steadily gather the pearls of the night  
And pass on to their use with the morning.

**THE SWISS GOOD-NIGHT.**—Among the lofty mountains and elevated valleys of Switzerland, the Alpine horn has another use besides that of sounding the far-famed Ranz des Vaches, or cow song; and this is of a very solemn and impressive nature. When the sun has set in the valley, and the snowy summits of the mountains gleam with golden light, the herdsman who dwells upon the highest habitable spot takes his horn and pronounces clearly and loudly through it, as through a speaking trumpet, "Praise the Lord God!" As soon as the sound is heard by the neighboring herdsmen, they issue from their huts, take their Alpine horns and repeat the same words. This frequently lasts a quarter of an hour, and the call resounds from all the mountains and rocky cliffs around. Silence at last settles over the scene. All the herdsmen kneel and pray with uncovered heads. Meantime, it has become quite dark. "Good night!" at last calls the highest herdsman through his horn. "Good night!" again resounds from all the mountains, the horns of the herdsmen and the rocky cliffs. The mountaineers then retire to their dwellings and to rest.—*Our Dumb Animals.*

## "Unity" Sunday School Lessons—Series XIV.

## STUDIES OF JESUS.

BY NEWTON M. MANN.

(The younger children may pass over the parts marked \*)

## LESSON XI.

## THE GREAT DENUNCIATION.

## I. EBB OF THE POPULAR TIDE.

The interest at first shown in Jesus did not keep up among the Galileans. He had criticised the Pharisees, and they grew cold and even hostile. Their influence with the people made itself felt against him. What had happened to John? (Matt. XIV: 8-12.) What did Jesus do when he heard of that? (Matt. XIV: 13.) What do we hear about a deputation of Pharisees and scribes coming from Jerusalem to see if he was teaching in accordance with the law and the traditions? (Mark VII.) Did he try to come to an understanding with them, or did he make it plain that he was not teaching their doctrines? It was the critical point in his career. Thenceforth he must expect to find the whole orthodox power implacably arrayed against him. Where did he go immediately after this interview? (Mark VII: 24.) Was it to escape from any plot of the incensed Pharisees? Perhaps so. It is said he sought retirement, and wished no one to know where he was. Only the twelve went with him, and he did not go to preach. Indeed, it does not appear that he ever spoke any more in the synagogues. Orthodoxy had shut the doors upon him. In the Jewish church he was a heretic, and a great part of his power with the people was gone. From this time on his talk was chiefly with his disciples. The prejudices and blindness of the people well-nigh exhausted his patience. What does he say of his own city, where, a few months before, he was so warmly greeted? (Matt. XI: 23, 24.) From this time on we catch now and then a word which shows his apprehension that his cause was lost. (Luke IX: 41; XI: 29-32; XVIII: 8.)

## II. THE CONFLICT.

He had declared war upon the Pharisees, and either they or he must be destroyed. Where should he go to have the struggle out? Where, but to Jerusalem, the seat and center of the orthodox faith? It might cost him his life; but if he did not go his gospel must come to naught. Already many who had been friendly to the movement pronounced it a failure. He might elude his enemies and fly to Tyre, or over the sea, to save his life, when no principle was sacrificed; but now, when the gospel itself was at stake, he must not count his life dear. He must go forward and beard the lion in his very den. It was a velvet paw that was extended to him as he entered the city. Who met and questioned him there? (Matt. XXII: 15, 23, 34.)

## III. PLAIN WORDS.

His coming and his conversation had excited an interest, and it is said all the city was stirred. (Matt. XXI: 10, 11.) The time to speak his boldest had come, not because he loved strife, but because he loved truth and right. Openly he raised his voice against the Pharisees in the city where they were most at home, arraigning them for their formalism, their insincerity, their disregard of their fellowmen,—told them they were in the way of progress,—would not go forward themselves, nor let others, and heaped upon them such a torrent of invective as never issued from his mouth before. (Matt. XXIII.)

## IV. THE EFFECT.

There could have been but one result. The people, much as they may have felt the justice of his words, were not prepared to join in denouncing their spiritual guides and their most influential and pious citizens. They listened to the young prophet from Galilee, but could promise him no support.

## V. AN APOCALYPSE.

The prospect for Jesus was never more gloomy. Evidently the kingdom of heaven was not at hand. Quite the reverse. Desolation and destruction instead. From the mood which was then forced upon him came a weird prophecy of disaster to the holy city, interfused with visions of what he called "the end of the age." (Matt. XXIV. Compare Dan. XII: 2; Esdras XV, XVI.)

## LESSON XII.

## MORE PARABLES.

We now resume the enumeration of the parables from Lesson VIII. Most of the following were spoken in Jerusalem, and they all appear to belong to the latter part of the ministry of Jesus. From what we have already learned, we are prepared to mark the altered tone.

\*21. THE WEDDING FEAST (Luke XII: 35.)—Your expectations from this title are hardly met in the text, which is somewhat confused. The parable teaches watchfulness and fidelity, and runs on through various forms to verse 49. It lacks unity, and has evidently suffered in editing.

\*22. THE UNJUST STEWARD (Luke XVI: 1.)—One of the most obscure and unsatisfactory of the parables. One cannot but think that it must have provoked, among those who heard it, a great many disagreeable questions. At any rate, they can hardly fail to occur to the reader now, if he has his eyes half open.

\*23. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (Luke XVI: 19.)—There cannot be much doubt what this story meant. We are inclined to wish there was! Parables of this sort were not made in the happy days when Jesus sat by the sea of Gennesaret, or breathed the Beatitudes from the sunny slopes about Capernaum. Not till he had visited the large cities and seen the inhumanities of the rich could he thus paint their final lot. The parable is genuine, almost beyond question; for who of that time but Jesus could have produced so powerful an utterance? What a picture to give children the nightmare, and make the old folks' hair stand on end! This Lazarus has nothing to do with Lazarus of Bethany.

\*24. THE UNJUST JUDGE (Luke XVIII: 1.)—What is the purpose of this parable according to the Evangelist's introduction? (1.) But what is it for which the woman petitions the unjust judge? (3.) And does he grant her request because it is reasonable, or because he is worried out with her entreaties? (5.) And what is it God will do if he is pressed in the same way? (7, 8.) Is this in the spirit of Matt. V: 44? We are not so much shocked that God's way should be illustrated by the way of an unjust judge, for the object is to heighten by contrast the certainty of the conclusion. If this hard magistrate will yield to entreaty, much more will the good God. The points we do not like are: 1st, praying for vengeance at all; and, 2d, the notion that it is the part of men to influence the Divine Will by steady and persistent pressure.

25. THE TWO SONS (Matt. XXI: 28.)—A very simple and forcible illustration, which the smallest children can understand. That is a bad boy who says "I will not," when his father tells him to do anything. But is he any better who says "I will," and does not do it? And does not the other seem a pretty good fellow in comparison, if, after saucily refusing, he re-considers, and does as he is bid? To whom did Jesus address this parable? How did it apply?

\*26. THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN (Matt. XXI: 33.)—In what city did Jesus utter the parables of this and the following chapters? Mark the undertone of dissatisfaction with the manner in which he was received. The hostile attitude of the authorities was by this time apparent. They might seize him any day and put him to death. The conviction of Jesus that he was the Messiah deepened as opposition to him increased, and he now freely referred to himself as the Son of God. To rebuke his opponents he tells this striking story of the vineyard. Who are represented by the husbandmen? (33.) Who by the servants? (34.) Who is the son? (38.) Who are meant by "other husbandmen"? (41.) What is meant by the rejected stone? (42.) Mark the prophecy in verse 41, which, if made then, is surprising enough.

27. THE MARRIAGE FESTIVAL (Matt. XXII: 1.)—Here we have once more a parable of the kingdom, but how different from the ten before considered! Now the many turn away from the teacher, and he has, therefore, much to say of those who will not come into his kingdom. What excuses do the various people invited to the feast give for not accepting? What course does the king finally take to get a company together? Where does he pick them up? (10.) What does this indicate as to the class of people who became disciples? After the company is assembled, what discovery is made? (11.) The expulsion of this person shows that freedom of admission into the church does not do away with the need of some spiritual fitness for membership.

28. THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH MAIDENS (Matt. XXV: 1.)—Here again it is a wedding, and instead of a proper garment, it is oil for their lamps that some are lacking. Weddings took place in the middle of the night, and lamps or torches were carried in the procession. (See Livermore's Commentary for fine illustrations of the same thing in Armenian and Hindoo weddings at the present day). The point enforced is the need of preparation for the kingdom or the church.

\*29. THE TALENTS (Matt. XXV: 14.)—The word *talent* here means strictly a sum of money, and must not be confused with any other sense. Its value may have been about \$1,500—a round sum. The amount is immaterial, and the real intent of the parable will be much better obtained by reading for "talent," whenever it occurs, "one thousand dollars." Try it, and avoid a confused and misleading conception. The money loaned represents not brains so much as duties and opportunities. Show how opportunities of usefulness are taken from him who does not improve them, and given to the one who does. A profound and instructive parable.

30. THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS (Matt. XXV: 32, 33.)—This is hardly more than a simile, for directly the figure is dropped, and the prophecy before, Jesus spoke more of the future lot of the good and the bad. These last parables leave us in little doubt what his idea of that future was. But do we find that the "blessed of my Father" are those only who have "believed in me"? or are they, as in the sermon on the Mount, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, those who have done the will of the Father in heaven?